

REMARKS

Claims 1- 30 are active. Certain of the claims are amended in the interest of clarity and consistency and to improve their form.

Entry of this amendment is respectfully requested.

FIRST CLASS CERTIFICATE

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William Squire

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Date

Respectfully submitted,
Robert F. Debrody et al.


by William Squire
Reg. No. 25,378, Attorney for Applicants

Tel. No.: (973) 994-1700
Fax No. : (973) 994-1744

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VERSION SHOWING CHANGES TO THE CLAIMS

1 (Currently amended). A bi-directional locking device and locking seal including a locking arrangement for receiving and locking a ~~flexible~~ shackle thereto, the shackle having at least one locking element having a ~~tapered portion~~ and a transverse locking shoulder, ~~such that the shackle~~ being is insertable into a device chamber for engagement with the locking arrangement, the locking arrangement comprising:

a body defining said chamber therein having a longitudinal axis ~~extending therethrough~~ and defining a longitudinal direction, the body having opposing top and bottom ends wherein the top end defines a top opening communicating with the chamber in the longitudinal direction, and the bottom end defines a bottom opening communicating with the chamber in the longitudinal direction; and

a plurality of resilient fingers positioned in the chamber and extending in a direction ~~from the body ends~~ toward each other in the longitudinal direction, the plurality of fingers each being positioned to allow passage of the at least one locking element of the shackle in first and second opposite insertion longitudinal directions through either the top or the bottom opening, at least one of the fingers for locking engaging the at least one locking element shoulder in response to the shackle movement in a ~~an~~ opposite direction opposite to the insertion direction to lock the shackle to the engaged at least one finger insert in the opposite direction.

2 (Original). The locking device of claim 1 wherein the fingers terminate at a respective corresponding tip portion which abut with and lock with the at least one locking element in response to the shackle movement in the opposite direction.

3 (Currently amended). The locking device of claim 1 wherein at least one first finger extends from a region adjacent to the top end and locks with the shackle at least one locking element shoulder when the shackle insertion direction is through the top opening and the shackle is being moved in the opposite direction to the shackle insertion direction, and at least one second finger extends from a region adjacent to the bottom end and locks with the shackle at least one locking element shoulder when the shackle insertion direction is through the bottom opening and the shackle is being moved in the opposite direction to the shackle insertion direction.

4 (Currently amended). The locking device of claim 1 wherein the fingers are transversely resilient relative to the longitudinal direction so that each finger being resiliently transversely radially deflected relative to the longitudinal direction in response to passage of the at least one locking element of the shackle in the chamber, ~~and either the at least one top finger or the at least one bottom finger locks with the at least one locking element of the shackle when the shackle is pulled in a direction opposite the insertion direction.~~

5 (Currently amended). The locking device of claim 1 wherein the plurality of fingers include a pair of transversely opposing spaced top fingers relative to the longitudinal axis and opposing pair of transversely spaced bottom fingers relative to the longitudinal axis, the top and bottom pairs respectively extending toward one another.

6 (Original). The locking device of claim 1 wherein the plurality of fingers include at least one top and at least one bottom finger, the at least one top and bottom fingers are in a mirror image relationship.

7 (Original). The locking device of claim 6 wherein the at least one top and

bottom fingers each have a channel that extends at an angle inclined toward the longitudinal axis.

8 (Original). The locking device of claim 6 wherein the top and bottom fingers include a first portion having a first channel extending in the longitudinal direction connected to the bottom and top ends and a second distal portion having a second channel extending from the first portion first channel at an angle.

9(Original). The locking device of claim 8 wherein the angle is acute.

10 (Original). The locking device of claim 8 wherein the second distal portion extends toward the longitudinal axis.

11(Original). The locking device of claim 8 wherein the top and bottom fingers extend in a direction transverse to the longitudinal axis.

12 (Original). The locking device of claim 8 wherein the second distal portion of the fingers extend in a direction transverse to the longitudinal axis.

13 (Original). The locking device of claim 2 wherein the finger tip portions terminate at a chamfered edge.

14. (Original) The locking device of claim 1 wherein the fingers are integrally molded one piece with the top and bottom ends.

15. (Original) The locking device of claim 1 wherein the device includes a socket with said chamber, the locking arrangement comprises an insert for insertion into the chamber.

16. (Original) The locking device of claim 5 wherein the plurality of fingers define a passageway adapted to receive the at least one locking element which is annular.

17. (Original) The locking device of claim 5 wherein the plurality of fingers define

a passageway adapted to receive the at least one locking element which includes a frusto-conical portion.

18. (Original) The locking device of claim 1 including first and second pairs of spaced mirror image fingers, each pair in mirror image orientation to the other pair, the pairs each defining a portion of a common passageway in the longitudinal direction, wherein the passageway is adapted to receive the at least one locking element which is frusto-conical and includes a rim with a shoulder which abuts the fingers of one of the first and second pairs of spaced mirror image fingers when the shackle is moved in the opposite direction to the insertion direction.

19. (Original) The locking device of claim 1 further including a socket having a chamber, wherein the locking arrangement comprises an insert fixedly attached inside the socket chamber.

20. (Original) The locking device of claim 19 wherein the shackle has a longitudinal axis, the socket is integral and one piece with the shackle and with a flag and wherein the socket has a longitudinal axis that extends substantially perpendicular to the shackle longitudinal axis.

21. (Original) The locking device of claim 19 wherein the body is substantially cylindrical.

22. (Original) The locking device of claim 19 wherein the body has a plurality of spaced side walls defining the chamber.

23. (Original) The locking device of claim 3 wherein a passageway is defined by the at least one first and second fingers and an inner side wall in transverse spaced relation relative to the longitudinal axis, and the locking element lockingly abuts the

inner side wall when the fingers lock with the locking element shoulder.

24. (Original) The locking device of claim 23 wherein the inner side wall includes a recess adapted and positioned for locking~~ly engaging~~ engagement with the locking element when at least one of the fingers lock with the locking element shoulder.

25 (Currently amended). A bi-directional lockable sealing device comprising which comprises:

a socket defining a first chamber therein,

a shackle having ~~an~~ at least one locking element, the shackle being fixed at one end to the socket and having a free end opposite the one end;

a locking insert secured to the socket in the first chamber, the locking insert including a body defining a second chamber therein having a longitudinal axis extending therethrough defining a longitudinal direction, the locking insert including opposing top and bottom ends where the top end defines a top opening communicating with the second chamber, and the bottom end defines a bottom opening communicating with the second chamber; and

a plurality of resilient fingers positioned in the second chamber, at least one first finger of the plurality extending in a direction away from the top end and at least one second finger ~~of from~~ the plurality extending in a direction away from the bottom end toward the first finger, the fingers defining a passageway in the second chamber arranged to allow passage of the at least one locking element as the free end of the shackle is pulled through the passageway in an insertion direction through ~~via~~ either the top or the bottom opening such that the fingers are in sliding resilient engagement with the at least one locking element, and wherein one of at least one first and second

fingers is arranged to abut and lock to at least one of the locking elements of the shackle when the shackle movement is in an ~~opposite~~ direction opposite to the insertion direction providing locking resistance to the shackle in the opposite direction.

26 (Currently amended). The sealing device of claim 25 wherein at least one finger extending in a direction away from the top end locks with the at least one shackle locking element when the shackle insertion direction is through the top opening and the shackle is being moved in the opposite direction to the shackle insertion direction, and the at least one finger extending from in a direction away from the bottom end locks with the shackle at least one locking element when the shackle insertion direction is through the bottom opening and the shackle is being moved in the opposite direction to the shackle insertion direction.

27 (Original). The sealing device of claim 25 further comprising a flag structure attached to the socket.

28 (Original). The sealing device of claim 25 further including a shank positioned between the socket and the shackle.

29 (Currently amended). A bi-directional lockable sealing device which comprises:

a socket including a body defining a chamber therein having a longitudinal axis ~~extending therethrough~~ defining a longitudinal direction, the socket including opposing top and bottom ends where the top end defines a top opening communicating with the chamber, and the bottom end defines a bottom opening communicating with the chamber;

a shackle having at least one locking element, ~~the shackle being fixed at one end~~

~~to the socket and having a free end opposite the one end; and~~

a plurality of resilient fingers positioned in the socket ~~chamber of the socket~~, at least one first finger of the plurality extending in a direction away from the top end and at least one second finger from the plurality extending in a direction away from the bottom end toward the first finger, the fingers and socket defining a passageway in the chamber and being arranged to allow passage of the at least one locking element as the free end of the shackle is pulled through the passageway in an insertion direction through ~~via~~ either the top or the bottom opening such that the fingers are in sliding resilient engagement with the at least one locking element, and wherein one of the at least one first and second fingers is arranged to abut and lock to the at least one ~~of the~~ locking element[[s]] of the shackle when the shackle movement is in an opposite direction to the insertion direction providing locking resistance to the shackle displacement in the opposite direction.

30. (Currently amended) A locking insert for use with a sealing device, the insert comprising

a body defining a ~~said~~ chamber therein having a longitudinal axis extending therethrough ~~and~~ defining a longitudinal direction, the body having opposing top and bottom ends wherein the top end defines a top opening communicating with the chamber in the longitudinal direction, and the bottom end defines a bottom opening communicating with the chamber in the longitudinal direction; and

a plurality of resilient fingers positioned in the chamber and extending in a direction away from the body ends toward each other in the longitudinal direction, the plurality of fingers being positioned to allow passage of the at least one locking element

of the shackle in first and second opposite insertion directions through either the top or the bottom opening, at least one of the fingers for locking engaging the at least one locking element shoulder in response to the shackle movement in an opposite direction to the insertion direction to lock the shackle to the insert in the opposite direction.